

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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by Paclib Group Pty Ltd

INTRODUCTION

The site is a 13.5ha industrial site bound by Lenore Drive to the south, existing industrial facilities to the west, proposed industrial facilities to the east, and residential areas to the north. There is a 3.0ha transmission line easement zone that takes up the northern section of the site. The project involves the development of an industrial estate consisting of a smaller warehouse & distribution facilities to the front, followed by larger printing, warehouse & distribution facilities at rear. The transmission easement zone is non-developable and will be left mostly untouched. The site is accessible from Lenore Drive through a shared estate driveway and an existing secondary driveway.



LOCATION PLAN

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

In the Erskine Park Employment Area, most of the land have been cleared or built upon with Industrial facilities. The facilities recently built on Lenore Drive provides an example of the industrial nature of the immediate precinct. The transmission line easement to the north of the site and immediately to the south of the St Clair/Erskine Park residential area is a significant feature in the visual landscape.

Within the site itself, bulk earthworks have been completed recently. There are various distinctive parts to the site. Starting from the northern boundary is large expanse of electrical easements zone with power poles, transmission tower and overhead transmission lines. The whole area is filled with low shrubs and small trees scattered around in a random manner. This part of the site has been left mostly untouched.

To the south of the easement zone lies a large flat building pad. This pad is approximately 3m lower than the transmission easement area. A second building pad is located to the south of the larger pad. The second pad is much smaller in size and sits 4m lower than the larger pad. There is a 20m landscape zone between the smaller pad and Lenore Drive.

It is worth noting that prior to the earthworks the site was naturally elevated to the north and sloped gently towards Lenore Drive to the south. This has been taken into consideration through the current earthworks and building pad layout, which is a series of cascading platforms and landscape zones resembling the natural fall of the site. It is also noted that the smaller pad is similar in size to the neighbouring Blackwell property, presenting a smaller scale industrial front to Lenore Drive and in consistent with neighbouring site.

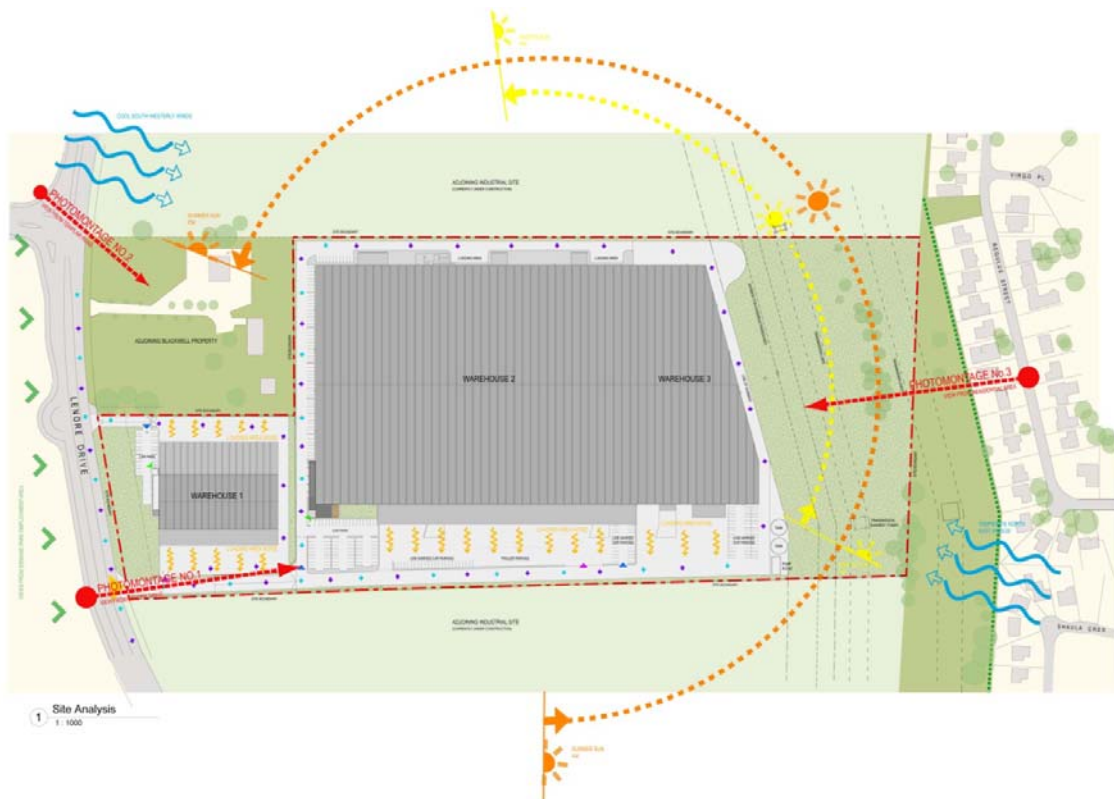


Figure 1: site analysis showing views for photomontage studies

MAIN VISUAL RECEIVERS

A visual impact analysis of the site and its surrounds was undertaken, including an on-site inspection and photographic studies to determine the features of the site and surrounding context. The existing environment and built form has been assessed, identifying the opportunities and constraints of the site and its surrounds. The main visual receivers in the vicinity of the site include:

- Lenore Drive streetscape
- Residential area to the North, on the other side of the overhead transmission lines.
- Employment related land users, predominantly to the southern side, including industrial facilities for Bluescope Steel, Coils Steel, Corporate Express and Strandbags.
- Blackwell property on the western side.
- Construction site to the eastern side.

A series of photomontages showing the proposed development on the existing site have been done to assist with the visual impact analysis.

LENORE DRIVE STREETSCAPE

In line with the characteristic of the site and the existing earthworks and building design, the proposed industrial estate is presented to Lenore Drive with a smaller warehouse & distribution facility, whilst much larger facilities located further behind on a higher pad. Such layout has resulted in an estate development with a more human scale along the front. It also vastly reduces the impact of larger facilities at rear. This is evident in the photomontage, where the larger and taller warehouse is seen to be “dwarfed” by the smaller warehouse in front. (Refer **Photomontage No.1**)

To assist with presenting a more human scale frontage to Lenore Drive, the main office has been located to dominate the front facade, providing a further breakdown in scale. A variety of building materials, utilising an earthy and cool colour palette, and various articulations on the facade make up a vivid and lively image when viewed from different angles along Lenore Drive. The building will be buffered by a 20m landscape zone that further softens the impact of the development, as well as enhancing the entry to the estate.



Photomontage No. 1: View along Lenore Drive from south-eastern corner of the site

Note: Impact of a much larger warehouse has been softened by virtue of its position at rear. The roof line of both buildings flow harmoniously as one and “vanish” into the transmission

easement zone beyond. Indicative landscape treatment to street boundary is shown to soften the visual impact.

The most common view along Lenore Drive will be one looking through the adjacent Blackwell property. The photomontage has shown the building sitting harmoniously amongst the existing trees and landscape. (Refer **Photomontage No.2**)



Photomontage No. 2: View along Lenore Drive from south-western corner of the site

Note: This is the view that people will first see driving along Lenore Drive into the industrial precinct. The silhouette of both buildings is softened by existing trees. Glimpses of office component to the larger warehouse at rear can be seen between trees and it has similar architectural expression to the front office.

RESIDENTIAL AREA TO THE NORTH

The residential areas of Erskine Park and St Clair, particularly from the section of Regulus St, approximately 200m to the north of the site, have significant views to the Erskine Park industrial precinct. The existing view is dominated by the overhead power lines as well as the existing industrial buildings including Corporate Express and Strandbags. (Refer **Existing View No.1**)



Existing View No. 1: view from No.20 Regulus St, Erskine Park.

It is worth noting that for most part of Regulus street not much of the subject site can be seen, since the residential areas are at a higher elevation in comparison to the subject site. In all the views from Regulus street the transmission lines and/or towers feature prominently in the background. (Refer Existing View No.2)



Existing View No.2: view from No.10 Regulus Street looking towards the direction of the subject site.

This view demonstrates the visual impact of the transmission tower and overhead powerlines that dominate the skyline.

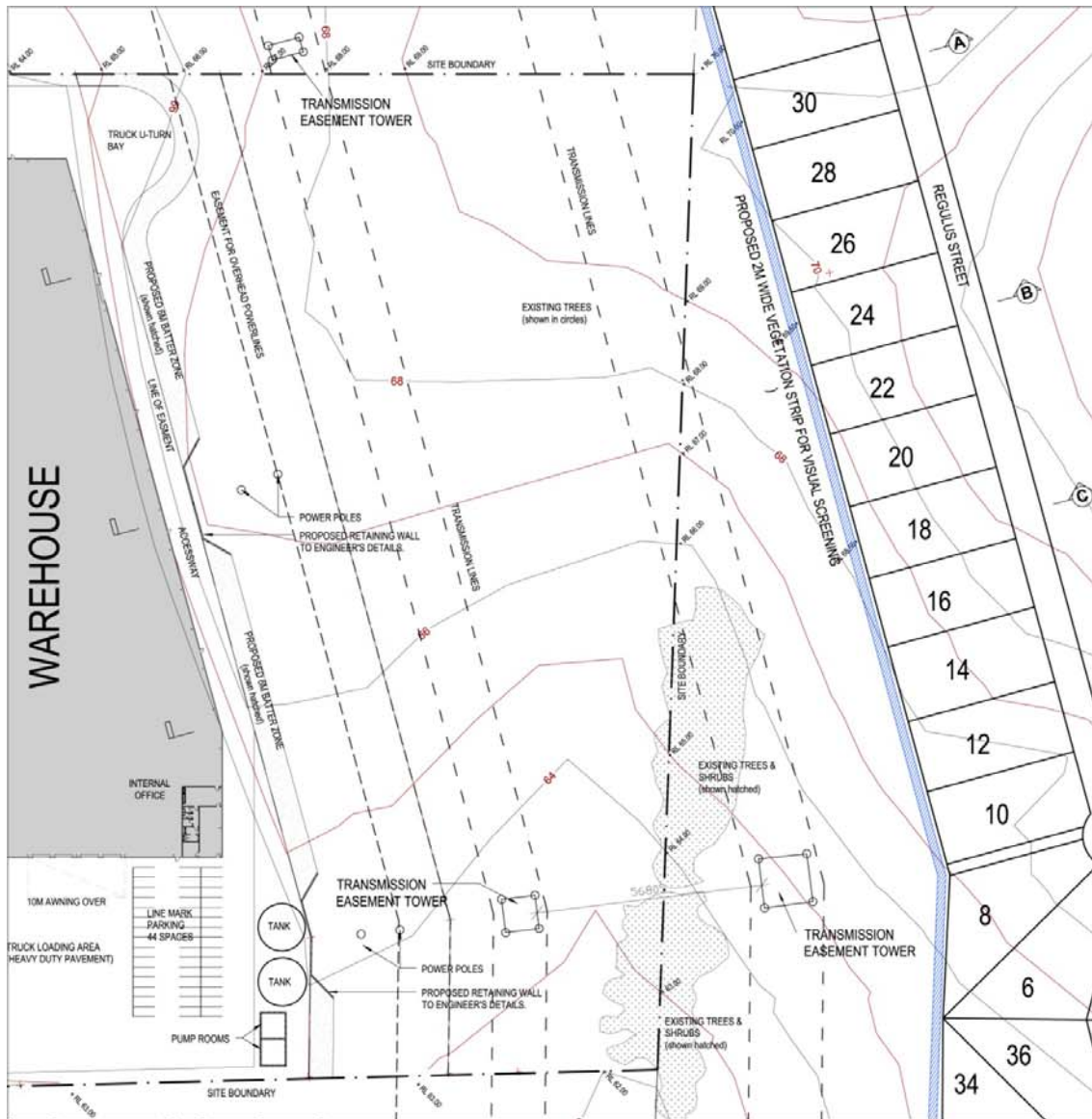


Photomontage No.3: possible view from No.20 Regulus street looking towards northern facade of the proposed warehouse facilities. (refer site analysis diagram)

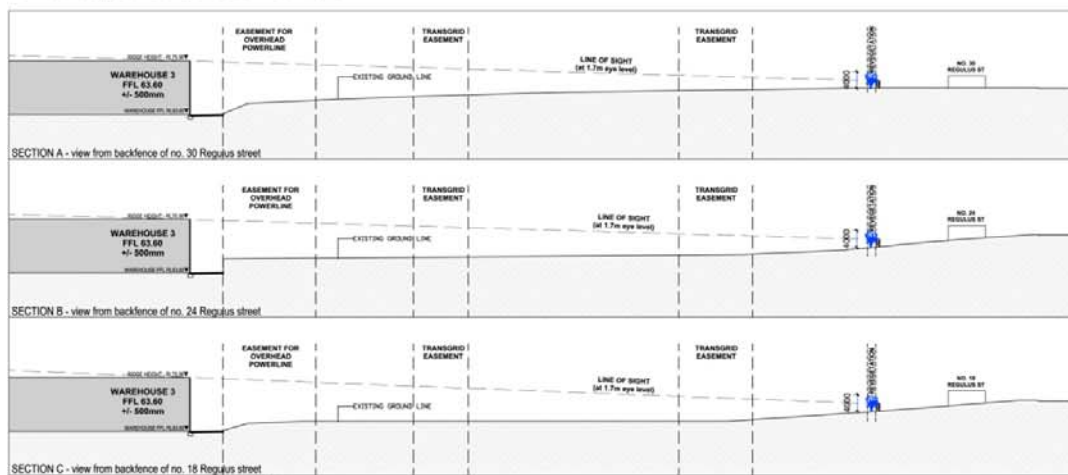
Roof line of proposed warehouse as seen from Regulus Street, set within the larger context of Erskine Park industrial precinct. Note that most of the rear wall of the proposed building are screened by existing vegetation.

As part of the visual impact analysis view from No.20 Regulus street has been chosen to represent the worst case scenario. An artist impression of the proposed warehouse has been montaged into the existing street view to assess the visual impact in order to indicate the most probable outcome of the development (Refer Photomontage No.3). Immediately north of the transmission easement near the residential interface there are currently existing trees and shrubs in front of the proposed warehouse building. As a result a significant area of the warehouse northern facade has been obscured. It is also interesting to point out that the existing industrial facilities (including Corporate Express and Strandbags) could still be seen in the background.

It is noted that no.20 Regulus represents a point at Regulus street where significant portion of the warehouse can be seen from street. For most part along Regulus street the warehouse view is expected to be blocked by houses, garage doors, fencing etc. As a result the streetscape along Regulus is largely unaffected by the proposed development. The photomontage has demonstrated that the subject development does not pose a significant visual issue. It is a modest, low key addition to the outlook of an existing industrial precinct.



landscape strip location plan



landscape strip section

Figure 3: Sectional studies of proposed landscape screen

As a further measure to mitigate any potential visual impact from the backyard of residence along Regulus street, a strip of landscape vegetation has been proposed along the back fences of houses to the southern side of the street, within the property of Lot 2177, DP776426. (Refer **Figure2: landscape strip location plan**) A separate visual study has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the proposed screening. (refer **Figure 2: landscape strip sections**). Sections have been taken at various points along Regulus street to show the relationship between the proposed development and existing residence. It can be seen from the sections that the proposed landscape strip will provide complete or partial coverage of the proposed development depending on the position of the viewer in the backyard. It should be noted that whilst every step has been taken to minimise the visual impact of the proposed development, complete visual block-out of the building to the entire Erskine Park residential area is impossible. It is envisaged that the propose landscape strip along the rear fencing will be the most effective mean of minimising visual impact from the residence along southern side of Regulus street.

BLACKWELL PROPERTIES

Land users at Blackwell property receive a significant view of the proposed development. This is mitigated through detail design of the estate that presents an aesthetically pleasing built form and facades. Overshadowing on the property has been kept to a minimum through the design and location of the proposed building. Shadow diagrams have been prepared that confirm that the impact of overshadowing on the Blackwell property is minimal. It is also understood from Penrith Council that the land is to be eventually used to house large scale industrial facility, similar to the proposed development.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT/INDUSTRIAL LAND USERS

There is currently a proposal to build an industrial facility immediately east of the site. Together with other existing employment/industrial land users, the views from these industrial sites are not considered to be as sensitive. Visual impacts of these receivers would nonetheless be mitigated by the design and landscaping measures outlined below:-

- Large landscape buffer to the rear within transmission easement.(ranging from approximate 86m to 155m wide)
- 3m wide landscape strip to the side boundaries
- Minimum of 20m landscape zone to the front boundary
- High quality landscape design to the entire site
- Building heights would be kept to reasonable levels. Maximum proposed ridge heights are 12.06m (warehouse 1) and 12.96m (warehouse 2&3) respectively. Maximum proposed wall heights are 10.80m (warehouse 1) and 10.3m (Warehouse 2&3) respectively.
- High quality architectural design to the buildings

With the adoption of these measures, it is considered that the project would not result in any significant visual impact to surrounding visual receivers, as would any other industrial development of it's kind already built in the precinct. Thus the project would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the locality.

EXTERNAL LIGHTING

External lighting to the proposed development will consist of security and safety lighting. The proposed light fitting will be a wall mounted type that points the light towards the ground around the perimeter or the facility. No spillage of light beyond site boundary is expected. All lighting will be designed and installed to Australian Standards to provide sufficient illumination to driveway surrounding the building. The facades are not expected to be front lit at night.

As the lighting is mainly for illumination at lower level, upper portion of the building facade will appear dim at night. As a result the proposed development is expected to have minimal visual impact at night.

SIGNAGE

The signage proposed for the development consists of a number of corporate signage at parapet level with individual tenant's corporate logo, as well as an estate pylon signage located near the estate entry with all tenant's logo. Both signages will be made out of high quality material and front lit.

The lighting proposed will be equivalent to a wall mounted clear tubular metal halide flood light. The proposed lamp will possibly have lumens of 19000, which will yield a range of lux level at different heights. The lux level is expected to sufficiently illuminate the signage at high level and rapidly diminish moving away from the signage. No light spill or glare is expected from the signage lighting, as it will be hang above the signage and angled inward to illuminate the wall area occupied by signage only. Similar light fitting is proposed for the pylon signage except it will be lit from below. The flood light for pylon will also be angled inwards to prevent spillage.

High level corporate signage will be located to the street and side frontages of proposed warehouses. There will be no signage to the rear wall facing the residence. As a result the proposed signage will have minimal visual impact to the residence of Erskine Park and its character is similar to the corporate signage of the existing warehouses in the immediate industrial precinct.

The proposed pylon signage will be approximately 3m high by 1.25m wide. It will be used to display all the tenants' logo and is proposed to be located at the entry/exit driveway. It is likely to be first of its kind in Erskine Park industrial precinct and is expected to contribute to the streetscape of Lenore Drive through its high quality material and lighting. The pylon signage will be within a 20m wide landscape zone and of a scale compatible with the proposed vegetation, office and warehouse buildings. Overall the pylon will signify the entry to the estate contribute to a visually pleasing Lenore Drive frontage.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed warehouse is considered an appropriate response to the emerging Erskine Park Employment Area which is zoned for industrial development. Street frontage to Lenore Drive has been addressed positively through site layout, landscape design and architectural treatment to the buildings. Large areas of landscape zones have been proposed to front and rear of the site, coupled with 3m wide landscape strip to side boundaries, effectively shielding the development from the adjacent visual receivers. The proposed pad and building heights are reasonable and appropriate. The design seeks to blend in and enhance the increasingly built up Erskine Park Employment Area. The view from the residential streets to the north is of a low key building with reasonable height that does not dominate the existing industrial landscape. Most of the rear wall of the proposed building would be obscured by existing trees beyond the transmission zone easements to the residential boundary. Visual impact to the adjacent employment/industrial land users will be mitigated through high quality architectural design to the buildings.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the desired future character of the industrial area, as reflected in the planning controls that are in place and will have no significant impact on the visual qualities of the area.